

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Minister Watt
Sent: Saturday, 11 May 2024 1:20 PM
To: 'ceo@sheepproducers.com.au'
Subject: Correspondence from the Senator Hon. Murray Watt [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Minister Watt to Mr Spencer.pdf

Hello,

Please find **attached** correspondence from Senator the Hon. Murray Watt.

Kind regards,

Office of Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister for Emergency Management
E: Minister.Watt@aff.gov.au | P: (02) 6277 7190



**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

MS24-900038

Mr Andrew Spencer
Chair
Sheep Producers Australia
Level 2, 28 National Circuit
FORREST ACT 2503

ceo@sheepproducers.com.au

Dear Mr ~~Spencer~~ *Andrew*

I am writing about the Australian Government's policy to phase out live sheep exports by sea.

On 11 May 2024, I announced that the phase out of live sheep exports by sea from Australia will occur on 1 May 2028. Legislation to end the trade on this date will be introduced, with the intention of passing it, in this term of the Australian Parliament. The phase out will occur without any additional restrictions such as caps or quotas, meaning industry will be able to trade up until this date.

The announcement brings a level of certainty many in the industry have been calling for, and allows clarity for future decision making. Notwithstanding, I acknowledge the policy is not supported by industry.

The Australian Government has committed \$107 million over 5 years to support affected sheep farmers, businesses and communities to plan for and adjust to the phase out. Early adaptation is encouraged. We want to ensure all affected participants in the sheep supply-chain make necessary adjustments to capitalise on emerging opportunities and are well positioned when the trade ends.

Phasing out live sheep exports by sea marks the delivery of a commitment endorsed by the Australian community at the 2022 federal election. The decisions taken by the Australian Government have been informed by the recommendations provided by an independent panel, following extensive public consultation. The panel undertook more than 90 meetings, addressed more than 2000 stakeholders, and reviewed more than 4,100 submissions and survey responses.

I have also released the panel's report and the Australian Government response. For more information please visit the department's website:
www.agriculture.gov.au/live-sheep-phase-out.

The Australian Government is providing funding to support producers, processors and other supply chain businesses to implement transition plans and invest in response actions. I encourage your members to use the funding that will be available to assist the implementation of transition plans.

The Australian Government will remain committed and engaged throughout the transition. We will appoint a Transition Advocate to facilitate two-way communication between industry and government, provide information to industry about transition support, and provide advice to government on how the transition is progressing. Details about the appointment will be made in due course.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will continue to regulate live sheep exports.

Maintaining Australia's reputation as a valued trading partner remains a key priority. Agricultural trade underpins the livelihoods of Australian farmers; therefore, the Australian Government has committed to invest in market development and trade relationship activities to maintain and grow markets for sheep meat and sheep products here in Australia and overseas.

I encourage industry and their representative organisations to work with the government to implement the phase out, and to support industry to adapt to a sustainable future through increased sheepmeat processing in Australia, keeping local jobs and sustaining regional development.

Yours sincerely



MURRAY WATT

11 / 5 / 2024